

critical digest



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Jun 5, 1961 Vol XIII No 11 The Weekly NYC Theatre Newsletter Digest Service-Published 52 weeks a year - \$25 per year

This Week in NYC

A strawhat type operation right off Broadway will be presented this summer at the air-conditioned 41st St Theatre by the co-owners Barbara Grimer and Eleanor Horn. Starting Jun 27 with Mindy Carson in The Voice of the Turtle, each program will play for two weeks at a \$4 week-end top. Other comedy productions, all staged by Matt Cimber, will include--Denise Darcel in The Little Hut Jul 25 and Donald Cook in The Moon is Blue Aug 8.

Plays

Mandingo closed after 8 performances... Wildcat to close Jun 5-Aug 7 while Lucille Ball recovers from respiratory infection and exhaustion. Star fainted onstage twice in past week with standby Betty Jane Watson subbing... The Sound of Music vacations Jul 3-17... All the Way Home switched back to Mon to Sat playing schedule... The Happiest Girl in the World Thur matinee patrons presented with "Odalisque" perfume.

Players

Stuart Damon, understudy, replaced Keith Mitchell, Irma La Douce... Janice Rule, The Happiest Girl in the World, fell during a first act dance, halting show at mid-week performance 15 minutes. Judith Hasskill completed act with Rule returning to finish second act.

Sam Levene to co-star with George Gobel, Let It Ride, new musical version of "13 Men on a Horse"... Sydney Chaplin set for male lead in Subways Are for Sleeping, to be directed-choreographed by Michael Kidd... Jack Cole to direct-choreograph Kean.

Jess Kimmel, 46, director and co-producer of Dinny and The Witches, found dead in NY apartment from overdose of pills.

NYC Calendar

Red Eye of Love- Living Theatre (530-6th Av)- 6/12

Billy Barnes People-Royale 6/13

A Fig Leaf in Her Bonnet-Gramercy Arts (138 E 27) 6/14

The Only Sense is Nonsense-Jan Hus (375 E 74) 6/14

As You Like It-Stratford Conn 6/15

Macbeth-Stratford, Conn 6/16

Broadway Business

Variety reports another large drop in business, and predicts 10 shows will close in a few weeks. Sellouts were- Carnival, Mary Mary, Sound of Music. Four shows on twofers.

Special Events

Forum on Avant Garde Theatre with Eugene Ionesco was cancelled at Longacre when word received that author could not come to US at this time.

TV Theatre Notes

"Happy With the Blues" TV biography of Harold Arlen to be presented in fall on NBC "Show of the Week."

Theatre Book Notes

"The Drama of Medieval England" by Arnold Williams published by Michigan State Univ Press (\$5)... "Jacobean Theatre-Stratford Upon Avon Studies I" collection of essays published by St Martin's Press (\$7.50).

Theatre Record Notes

The Zoo Story with NY Off Broadway original cast disc made by Spoken Arts Records... Donnybrook! original cast album made by Kapp Records.

Off Broadway

A Curious Evening With Gypsy Rose Lee closed after 25 performances with tour opening Jun 20 in Columbus... Ghosts to be revived Sept 14 at 4th St Theatre by David Ross, current Hedda Gabler tour starts Oct 6... Leave It To Jane announces "Last Weeks"... Sybil Lamb subbed for Liza Stuart, The Fantasticks, when latter rushed to Chicago to fill in for ill Mimi Turque of road cast.

Three productions of plays by Michel de Ghelderode planned for next season--Chronicles of Hell by Actors Repertory Theatre... Barabbas by Federated Productions and Christopher Columbus musical by American Friends of Michel de Ghelderode.

Gayden by Mignon & Robert McLaughlin to be revived Oct 30 at Maidman by Jack Morris, executive director of American Theatre Wing... Madame Aphrodite a new musical by Tad Mosel & Jerry Herman to be directed in fall by Robert Turoff.

Award Dept

6th annual "Village Voice Obie (Off Broadway) Awards" presented to--The Blacks, Hedda Gabler, Anne Meacham, Khigh Dhiegh, Godfrey Cambridge, Lester Rawlins, Joan Hackett, Gerry Jedd, James Coco. The judges were Jerry Tallmer, Harold Clurman, Tom Driver.

Theatre Film Notes

"Infamous" is new name of The Children's Hour remake by United Artists.

NY Shakespeare

Nan Martin to star in NY Shakespeare Festival's Much Ado About Nothing Jul 5, Wollman Memorial, Central Park, Joe Papp directs.

Play Diary

3 American Plays- New Playwrights- 5/28... Paradise Is-Land-Jonas Beach 6/22... Voice of Turtle-41st St 6/27.

DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

Pal Joey- City Center 5/31. 7 pros- 6 of them raves- filed on NY City Center Light Opera Co limited two week revival of 1940 Richard Rodgers- Lorenz Hart, John O'Hara musical with Bob Fosse, Carol Bruce, Sheila Bond, Eileen Heckart, Harvey Stone, staged by Gus Schirmer, Jr. choreography by Ralph Beaumont, musical direction by Jay Blackton. Play, players, production and price (\$3.95 top) were all applauded in the six rave notices, with only the Herald Tribune reviewer having negative views on some of the leading players. Taubman, Times, cheered gifted company in production staged with animation in musical that offers excellent entertainment and at the same time emphasizes the high standards musicals should strive for. Chapman, News, urged longer run of handsome, well-acted show just about as sophisticated now as it was 20 years ago. Coleman, Mirror, approved of top flight cast in tip-top revival, a hit all over again, tuneful, cleverly worded flavorsome satiric lullaby. Watts, Post, found the well-cast production captured spirit and quality of the richly entertaining musical with the proper zest and vitality. McClain, Journal American, enjoyed the glorious revival with cast frequently superior to the original. He thought Carol Bruce was better than original Vivienne Segal, Sheila Bond better than original Judy Holliday, and Eileen Heckart better than anybody. Aston, World Telegram & Sun, shouted praise for the astonishingly gifted cast in show that made him burst with enjoyment. Milder recommendation given final City Center musical production of spring season by Christ, Herald Tribune, who felt Eileen Heckart in her bit role singing "Zip" and a delightfully ill-assorted gang of chorus gals walked off with the show. Risking charges of sacrilege Herald Tribune Arts Editor thought Fosse too sweet for the O'Hara book, and too indifferent; and also thought Bond lacks the unself-consciousness that brings the proper brass and shoddiness to the part.

A Call on Kuprin-Broadhurst 5/25. 4 pro- Times, Mirror, Post, Journal American- and 3 con- Herald Tribune, News, World Telegram & Sun- filed on new play by Jerome Lawrence & Robert E Lee based on Maurice Edelman's novel, presented by Robert K Griffith-Harold Prince, directed by George Abbott with Jeffrey Lynn, Eugenie Leontovich, George Voskovec, Leon Janney, Lydia Bruce. Critics split on value of script, most okaying the performances. The pros okayed play as interesting suspense melodrama, while cons vetoed it as shallow TV-film fare. Taubman, Times, praised contemporary, tautly suspenseful play which says something of vast importance, which after a slow start holds and then grips the attention. Coleman, Mirror, approved of reasonably good suspense melodrama with interesting performances. Watts, Post, enjoyed steadily effective suspense thriller which combines its atmosphere of theatrical excitement with a believable Russian background and a remarkable sense of fairness. Staging is alert and vivid and performances notably good, Post aisle-sitter okayed. McClain, Journal American, raved over fascinating modern melodrama well conceived, acted and magnificently produced, directed with skill. Dissenter Kerr, Herald Tribune, panned production as a great deal of scenery in three acts with a hero who seems to have slipped into a comic strip and whose efforts at massive reality ends in part tonnage and part tinsel. Chapman, News, thought it was like an old "Foreign Correspondent" film script that somebody forgot to put on TV, produced with fine attention to type-casting and physical detail. Aston, WTS, could find nothing believable except Leontovich's embellishments to a thriller the authors had not written.



THEATRE BOOK COMMENTS

"Phaedra and Figaro", verse translation of Racine's Phedre by Robert Lowell and translation of Beaumarchais' Figaro's Marriage by Jacques Barzun (Farrar, Straus & Cudahy \$5) recommended by Clurman, Times Book Review, as a volume that belongs on every drama-lover's shelf. Ignorance of both French masterpieces is not so much a cultural crime as a betrayal of pleasure.



THEATRE RECORD COMMENTS

Young Abe Lincoln original cast album (Golden) of 60 minute children's musical currently playing at York Theatre matinees approved by Aston, World Telegram & Sun. Reviewer agreed with his own first estimate as tip top entertainment.

Shakespeare Recording Society (Caedmon) stereo discs of Macbeth, Othello and The Taming of the Shrew use the resources of stereo to the hilt, approves Lask, Times ... Marlowe Society of England (London) production of The Tempest praised by Times record reviewer, while same firms discs of The Winter's Tale and Henry IV Part 2 seem dull and dragged out



INTER- VIEW HI-LITES

MAURICE EDELMAN, author of novel "A Call on Kuprin" from which play is based, thinks the drama is a worthwhile play with some important observations, he told Watts, Post. Novelist thinks anyone writing today must set out with the purpose of explaining world affairs or human relationships... Part of the good health of the NY theatre is due to the fact that we have mature critics of high integrity, Edelman told Sloane, World Telegram & Sun. Many London critics imitate the manners of Broadway critics without the experience or the substance of theatrical knowledge which would excuse them.

DAVID MERRICK sees the excellent road business, the solid booking of NY and out of town theatres to next Christmas as heartening aspects, he told Crosby, Herald Tribune. Producer does wonder why critics are so lenient to Off Broadway, which he considers "Vanity Theatre" as most of the shows are produced by relatives or a boy friend of an actress.

HUME CRONYN, Big Fish, Little Fish, panned Tynan, London Observer, as a critic he cannot bear, he told Werahba, Post. Tynan's trademark is malice, he uses his position as a soapbox to draw attention to himself, his attitude is lordly condescension. Not to be condemned by the British critic is a mark of an actor's shortcomings. He has a vast superiority complex, his reviews are exercises in spleen.



GREEN
ROOM
DEPARTMENT

CITY CENTER SMILES... High quality and low prices comprise an unbeatable bargain as offered New Yorkers by the City Center, states World Telegram & Sun editorial which wished continued success to venture ... Possible division of the City Center performing schedule if the old Masonic Temple on W 55 St is retained in addition to a new Lincoln Center playhouse forseen by Little, Herald Tribune. Ballet, musicals and foreign attractions would be played at Lincoln Center and opera, Gilbert & Sullivan and drama programs at the W 55 St site.

PLAYWRIGHTS CUTS... Broadway reaction to new Dramatist Guild contract offering to cut royalties if others do likewise was reported as mixed. Robert Whitehead, League of NY Theatres, marked it as an important step in solving the economic problems of theatre. Shepard Traube, Society of Directors, wondered how his new group could participate as it was not yet recognized by the League. Louis Lotito, City Playhouses, was encouraged but had misgivings about the strings attached. Peter Witt, Theatrical Artists Representatives, asked what sacrifices producers and theatre owners will make. Actors Equity has been asked by Whitehead to bring all possible influence on stars to cooperate... Fred Coe has a proposal that would have every element of theatre work at a reduced salary plus a percentage of the gross, reports Lyons, Post.

STEVENS WAVE... If Robert Whitehead would keep a closer eye on his occasional partner Roger L. Stevens, he wouldn't be hollering that the theatre is about to be inundated by musicals, points out Funke, Times. Forthcoming Stevens' entries for next season include--- Judith by Christopher Fry, Blood Sweat and Stanley Poole by James & William Goldman, Romulus the Great by Gore Vidal, The Caretaker by Harold Pinter, First Love by Sam Taylor and Man of All Seasons by Robert Bolt.

DRAMA MAIL BOX... Five day work-week killed the play going habit that was developed during the 1920's and 1930's by office workers attending Sat. matinee, suggests Herald Tribune reader... Subsidies to popular restaurants and theatres so prices can be lowered for all rather than expense deductions which favour the few urged by novelist Louis Auchincloss in Times note.

REVIEWERS AT WORK... Correcting a self-made error in his "Best Plays of---" annuals, Chapman, News, gives Longest Run Musical Prize to My Fair Lady which will pass the 2213 mark Jul 11. Critic bowed to MFL press agent Dick Maney who proved that the Oklahoma record of 2248 included 48 performances for Stage Relief and Actors Fund... In any given season Aston, World Telegram & Sun, admits he decides in print that at least half a dozen youngsters were about to set the West 40s on fire, only to realize by mid-May they were substantially, but obscurely, employed at diverse soda fountains.

FOY IN JAIL... Eddie Foy, Donnybrook, should probably be jailed for what he is doing in the new musical, charges Kerr, Herald Tribune. The only trouble is that we'd all want to go to jail with him.



PROS & CONS BY TMK

A Call on Kuprin is a fast-moving topical spy melodrama that remains continually interesting inspite of a few worrisome details. The documentary-type background of Moscow civilian life today is fascinating, be it accurate or not. But the details of spy operation in Moscow by Americans leaves much to be desired. No matter how low a person's opinion of the CIA and the State Dept is at this moment, it is inconceivable that everyone concerned with the particular spy mission involved would be trying for the title of "The Stupid American." A slick professional production, well acted and swiftly paced, plus the fastest moving scene changers in town, make up for some of the shallow propaganda errors. The result is a more than satisfying evening of drama.

Things Which Didn't Happen Last Week Dept: Not one producer followed lead of Fiorello! which cut ticket prices and continued to play to good business. Not one producer followed lead of The Happiest Girl in the World who switched to a third matinee per week. Not one star and/or craft union declared they would back the new Dramatist Guild contract accepting lower salary until the investors are paid off. You can say what you want about Broadway producers and stars, but they cannot be accused of being impetuous.

A fine opportunity to introduce theatre going to young soldiers overseas was missed with the summer - stock type presentations picked by USO-AETA to tour next season. Among plays picked from the nine colleges selected were two productions of Where's Charley, Tender Trap, Three Men on a Horse, Babes in Arms. Whoever is to blame for this low state of taste--army entertainment officers, USO officials, or college drama department chairman--should act quickly to correct this mistake. This kind of fluff can be done bigger and funnier in the films. If limited by camp officials to light entertainment, certainly all involved can come forth with productions of more substance and lasting value.

Forthcoming Off Broadway production of Christopher Columbus musical is to be presented by new organization called "American Friends of Michel de Gheldere." Potentialities of expanded Off Broadway production opened by this concept are so staggering that anyone who does not invest in the construction of a new Off Broadway playhouse is just plain foolish.

Understudies had a bad week on Broadway. Wildcat closed without any critical review of the job down by recently hired standby Betty Jane Watson. Janice Rule, The Happiest Girl in the World, fell and hurt herself only enough to stay out of the end of the first act, but return by the second. While Stuart Damon awaiting his big break in Irma La Douce will portray the lead only until a British cast member can arrive. With the excess of awards given each spring it is a pity that someone does not give prizes to the most heart-breaking experiences of understudies.



OUTER BROADWAY THEATRE LETTER

College Theatre

Union Theological Seminary, NYC, announces a Masters Degree in Religious Education with Emphasis in Drama program. Courses will explore the connection between Christian education and drama and will include field experience in local church and work with various age groups.

Poet's Theatre, Harvard Univ, presented The Tree Witch a new verse drama by Peter Viereck at Loeb Drama Center... Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Me, to present Romeo & Juliet Jul 9 as 50th Shakespeare commencement production... Oh! Wyoming new musical with book by Mary O'Hara being presented at Catholic Univ, Washington, D. C.

Yoshimizu Nihonmatsu of Japan's film industry to teach course in Japanese stage history at Yale Univ... St Michael's College Playhouse, Winooski Park, Vt, opens playhouse seating 360 Jul 2 with 11th consecutive summer resident season of Players, Inc

AETA-ANTA

AETA-USO overseas tours for 9 of 100 college group applicants for 1961-62 season selected. Bells Are Ringing-Univ of Colo---Three Men on a Horse-Montana State College... Where's Charley-Univ of Calif, Santa Barbara & Wayne State Univ, Detroit... Born Yesterday-Southern Illinois Univ, Carbondale... Babes in Arms, Millsaps College, Jackson, Miss... Light Up the Sky-Montclair, NJ, State College.

US delegates at Jun 5-10 Vienna International Theatre Institute confab are--Joseph Anthony, Stuart Vaughan, Rosamond Gilder, Sherman Ewing, Warren Caro, Dr Campton Bell (Univ of Denver), and Dr. Lewin Goff (Univ of Kansas.)

1962 ANTA Assembly set for NYC Mar 4-7, after this year's event was almost snowed out.

Drama Desk

Arnold Zeitlin and Win Fanning will sub for Harold Cohen, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, for six week's while latter recovers from surgery.

Summer Playhouses

Oakdale Musical Theatre, Wallingford, Conn opens 8th season Jun 12 with Carol Channing's Show Girl, followed Jun 9 by Guys and Dolls with Tony Martin, Alan King, Jaye P Morgan... Pocono Playhouse, Mountainhome, Pa. opens 15th season Jun 12 with A Majority of One featuring Herbert Marshall and Dora Weisman... Westport, Conn. Country Playhouse opens 31st season Jun 15 with The Pleasure of His Company starring Cornelia Otis Skinner... Jean Pierre Aumont and Marisa Pavan to star in Anatol musical version of Schnitzler's farce Jul 31-Aug 19 at American Festival, Cambridge, Mass.

Natural Affection new play by William Inge to debut at La Jolla, Calif Playhouse, with Shelley Winters and Harry Guardino prior to NY try in fall... Marriage Go Round package with Sheppard Strudwick and Maggie O'Neill (Mrs S.) opens season at Hampton, NH, Playhouse... Hedy Lamarr to tour in The Chalk Garden.

Saranac Lake, NY, Summer Theatre to be operated this season by Marta Byer.

Spring Repertory

Tyrone Guthrie Theatre, Minneapolis, set to open the week of May 14, 1963 with three plays in repertory, two more to be added. Oliver Rea, administrative director, plans 20 week season with three different plays presented weekly by central company of 25.

"Freddie" annual awards picked by 1100 season subscribers of Fred Miller Theatre, Milwaukee, selected Walter Abel, Death of A Salesman, and Mary Schager, Marriage Go Round and Othello, as the best performers of season.

Road Shows

Three road productions of The Premise set for summer and fall. First group to play Jun 23 to Sept 4 at Westport, Conn. in a reconstructed "Noah's Barn." Staged by Zev Patterman company includes Marcie Hubert, Barbara Anson, Peter Bonerz. After Conn stand this company will tour to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas. Second group to open in Jul at Chase Hotel, St Louis, and a third is set for Arena Stages, Washington, D. C. starting Christmas week.

London

Belle or the Ballad of Dr Crippen musical by Wolf Mankowitz & Monty Norman which was panned by some critics as being in very bad taste closed after 52 performances... Finian's Rainbow with Jeannie Carson, Biff McGuire which was due Jun 8 at Saville, extended tour again... Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'be censored for third time... The Lord Chamberlain Regrets new revue due in Aug... Bye Bye Birdie opens Jun 15 at Her Majesty's... Camelot has booked Drury Lane for 1963 following My Fair Lady... Rain with Sarah Churchill's stock company opened tour at Bristol.

Paris

West Side Story returned to Paris for three additional weeks after two week Italian trip... First Love French version of Sam Taylor's play to be staged by Jean-Louis Barrault... Crime and Punishment with Robert Hirsch to be presented next season by Comedie-Francaise.

US Repertory

Theatre Guild American Repertory Company three productions won rave notices and sellout audiences during three day Rome visit. Florence, Trieste, Turin stops prior to Paris... \$2500 weekly salary of Helen Hayes criticized by House Appropriations Committee investigating United States Information Agency budget. Group questioned advisability of spending \$950,000 of federal funds to send the three American plays abroad.

Legal Dept

Desegregation of the legit theatre in the south, as far as Equity touring companies are concerned, will be completed next season. The League of NY Theatres and Actors Equity agreed not to play to segregated audiences, though some playhouses are already booked to Jun 1962.



"CD" digests all theatre material in the 2100 pages of 7 NY daily papers of the preceding week. "CD" subscribers are invited to inquire further for more specific data on current reviews, back reviews and out-of-town tryout reviews via mail, phone or drop by for coffee and facts when in NYC.

